

A) Amendments to the Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended):

In a spacer forming method in which drops of ink with a granular spacer dispersed in solvent is jetted by an ink jetting method utilizing nozzles of an ink jet head onto plural spacer forming positions on one of opposite substrates for maintaining a constant gap to be filled with liquid crystal between said opposite substrates, the spacer forming method characterized in that plural of said drops are jetted including the steps of jetting plural drops onto each of said spacer forming positions[.], characterized in that the spacer forming method includes:

a first step of testing whether there are abnormal nozzles in the ink jet head before said ink drops are jetted onto spacer forming positions;

a second step of jetting said ink drops from normal nozzles only onto the corresponding spacer forming positions; and

a third step of shifting the corresponding relative lateral position of said nozzles and said spacer forming positions whereby the normal nozzles register with the spacer forming positions which previously registered with the abnormal nozzles.

Claim 2 (previously presented):

A spacer forming method according to claim 1 in which said drops of ink are deposited onto crossing portions of a non-pixel lattice, and pixels are positioned in openings of said lattice.

Claim 3 (previously presented):

A spacer forming method according to claim 1 in which said drops of ink are jetted onto said spacer forming positions from plural nozzles of the ink jet head and the corresponding relative lateral position between each nozzle and a respective spacer forming position is so changed that plural drops are not consequently jetted from the same nozzle onto the same spacer forming positions.

Claim 4 (previously presented):

A spacer forming method according to claim 1 in which said drops of ink are jetted onto said spacer forming positions from plural nozzles of the ink jet head and the corresponding relative lateral position between the nozzle and a respective spacer forming position is so changed that plural drops are jetted from different ones of said nozzles onto the same spacer forming position.

Claim 5 (canceled).

Claim 6 (currently amended):

A spacer forming method according to claim [5] 1 in which the testing is judged by ink jetting speed of the nozzles of the ink jet head.

Claim 7 (currently amended):

A spacer forming method according to claim [5] 1 in which the testing is judged by observing ink jetting shift to a drop position of the nozzle from a predetermined position.

Claim 8 (currently amended):

A spacer forming method according to claim 7 in which said ink jetting shift is represented by $D \tan \theta$ where D represents the length of the line connecting the center of the nozzle and the center of the spacer forming positions and θ represents an angle of said line to the jetting direction of the jetting ink.

Claim 9 (previously presented):

A spacer forming method according to claim 7 in which said shift is represented as $V_s \times D / V_d$, where D is the length of the line connecting the center of the nozzle and the center of the corresponding spacer forming positions, V_s is a relative moving speed of the nozzle and the substrate, and V_d is the jetting speed of the ink from the nozzle.

Claim 10 (previously presented):

In a spacer forming method in which ink with a granular spacer dispersed in solvent is jetted onto plural spacer forming positions from nozzles of an ink jet head, on one of opposite substrates for maintaining a constant gap, to be filled with liquid crystal, between said opposite substrates, the spacer forming method characterized in that it comprises:

a first step of testing whether or not there is one or more abnormal nozzles in the ink jet head before said ink is jetted onto spacer forming positions;

a second step of jetting ink from normal nozzles and not jetting ink from abnormal nozzles onto the corresponding spacer forming positions; and

a third step of shifting the corresponding relative position of said nozzle and said spacer forming positions and thereby making a normal nozzle registered with the spacer forming positions which formerly registered with an abnormal nozzle in said second step of jetting ink onto said spacer forming positions from said normal nozzles.

Claim 11 (previously presented):

In a spacer forming apparatus wherein ink with a granular spacer dispersed in solvent is jetted onto plural spacer forming positions from nozzles of an ink jet head on one of opposite substrates for maintaining a constant gap to be filled with liquid crystal, between said opposite substrates, the spacer forming apparatus characterized in that it comprises:

ink jetting observing means for observing ink jetting of said nozzle;

abnormal nozzle judgment means for judging an abnormal jetting nozzle on the basis of the observation result of said jetting observing means; and

a control means whereby ink is not jetted from the abnormal nozzle and ink is jetted from normal nozzles onto spacer forming positions, wherein the relative corresponding positions between the nozzle and spacer forming positions are shifted so that the spacer forming positions registered with the abnormal nozzle is made to register with the normal nozzle and ink is jetted onto the spacer forming positions from the normal nozzle.